

# Littletown – A mystery

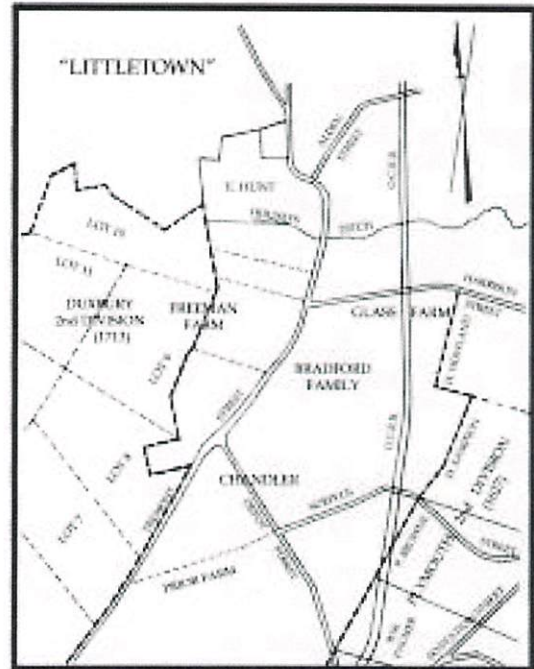
By Lamont R. "Monty" Healy  
Clipper Contributor

The area around the intersection of Harrison and Tremont streets, where the Duxbury Rural And Historical Society's recently restored Bradford House stands, is called "Littletown" — why, is somewhat of a mystery. At first I tried to see if some of the Little family, who primarily settled in Marshfield, might have lived in this area. The hope was to exhaust that possibility. I did find two Littles who owned property in Duxbury. Captain Isaac Little owned land in the Littletown area that he sold in 1737. He



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had acquired it only a few years before. Both the purchase and sale happened long after the area had become known in deeds as "a place commonly known as Littletown," (1693). Captain Isaac was a primary owner of a smelting furnace at Pembroke's Furnace Pond when Pembroke was still part of Duxbury (1708). George Little lived in Duxbury but probably not in this area. He was a descendant of the Bradfords and Delanos on his mother's side of the family, in addition to being a descendant of the Warrens on the Little side. He, too, was living long after the Littletown name first appeared.



So, that left us with two possibilities for the name of the area, one being a smaller "town" as compared to the larger "town"; the other being related to the smaller lots in the area. The first possibility was that the center of activity in the town was Pilgrim By-Way, over as far as Surplus Street and Chestnut Street, where the first two meeting houses were and other local activity took place. Remember there was no Hall's Corner, and Washington Street and Bay Road did not exist (Note: Street names are current to orient ourselves). This area was referred to as "Duxburrrough Town" so, logically, an area some distance away, occupied by a few farms and houses might be called "Littletown" where the Glass Farm, Freeman Farm and Chandler homestead were located.

The second possibility and my current theory is that this area was divided into smaller lots probably as part of the 1627 Plymouth 2nd Division ("Shore Lots") where most lots were 80 to 100 acres each. The lots in Littletown were generally much smaller, around 10 acres. Henry Fish, in his Duxbury Notes (1923), describes the area as: "These small lots or grants consisted of about 10 acres....the names of Tisdale, Brett, Clark, Sandford and several more, for a time made this little valley their home or until the moving spirit caused them to depart for newer fields." (Emphasis mine.) The Hunt House (1640) was originally on a 10-acre lot, just north of Hounds Ditch (little valley). These lots were established long before the Duxbury 1st Division (1710) and 2nd Division (1713). Some of the owners were E. Hawes, who built the Hunt House, E. Hunt, M. Kempton, J. Tisdale, T. Clark, W. Brett, Sandford, and E. Hall. The neighborhood extended from Alden Street to Harrison Street and back as far as the town hall and the First Parish Church.

This area, because of these small lots (amongst many large lots) probably took the name of Littletown. As we do more research, we will look for any other possibilities. The research is intended to locate the Glass Farm, Freeman Farm, Chandler property and the Bradford family of Col. Gamaliel Bradford and the relationship of these properties to Duxbury's 1st and 2nd Divisions.

So, for now, little lots in a little valley equals "Littletown."

*Ed. Note: Monty Healy regularly writes about Duxbury history and its people.*